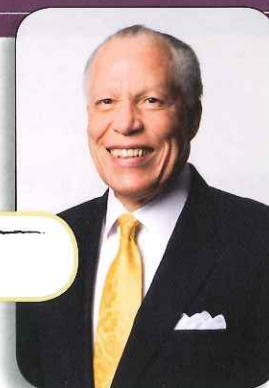


ASCD Community

Message from the

Executive Director

Gene R. Carter



Lesson Study Enhances Teaching and Learning

Increasingly throughout the world, it has become more common for schools to invest in developing professional learning teams as a central strategy for improving teaching and student learning. A growing body of education research suggests that effective professional reform is classroom-embedded, collaborative, and ongoing in line with current development.

During the past decade, there has been a growing worldwide interest in *lesson study*—a collaboration-based teacher professional development approach that originated in Japan. Lesson study, as a form of work among teachers, is now a well-documented approach for helping teachers develop their knowledge and skills related to supporting student learning, as explained by Clea Fernandez and Makoto Yoshida in *Lesson Study: A Japanese Approach to Improving Mathematics Teaching and Learning*.

Lesson study is accomplished through research lessons in different forms, but all build on teacher collaboration and self-critical reflection and are, in certain ways, connected to demands from curriculum, explains John Eliot in the *International Journal for Lesson and Learning Studies*.

According to Professor Lee Sing Kong, director of the National Institute of Education at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore, lesson study is now practiced in more than 160 schools in Singapore. He noted that a survey conducted in 2011 found that lesson study has brought about greater collegiality among teachers and provided a platform for mentoring beginning teachers.

In Singapore, lesson study is a potent, embedded peer-to-peer professional learning strategy that empowers teachers to work collaboratively and dig deeper into their lesson designs and teaching strategies with students' learning outcomes in mind.

Lesson study has also been adapted to schools in Thailand. Since 2006, the Center for Research in Mathematics Education has been conducting a project for the professional development of mathematics teachers. This study aims to describe how a variety of activities in the project's schools provide opportunities for teachers to learn.

The faculty focused on how to construct open-ended problems, how to make them into mathematical activities using short instruction, and how to organize these activities in the classrooms.

From 2010 to 2012, lesson study has been used in a large-scale project in the United Kingdom to improve the teaching and learning of students with moderate learning difficulties. This has been the largest scale use of lesson study in the UK, where there is growing interest in lesson study for both preservice and inservice professional learning and development.

In the United States, Kristen Bieda at Michigan State University and Catherine Lewis at Mills College note that lesson study can be a particularly rich approximation of practice that allows teachers to collaboratively engage with the process of teaching to develop deeper understandings about content and student thinking.

The lesson study process of growth and development provides opportunities for teachers to examine and challenge their assumptions about their role; experiment with teaching strategies; and develop a deeper understanding of their subject content, the students they teach, and how their students learn.

The classroom is a complex and challenging environment in which teachers and students face many questions and dilemmas. In preparing today's learners for a future we can only imagine, teachers must be learners themselves. Therefore, consider using the lesson study process to build teacher capacity to serve the needs of the whole child. **EU**